

carrying ballast from the Swansea barge, Pictou Castle, which arrived in the Tees, from London, on the 21st November, a labourer, who came upon it, was immediately right hand, and with the exception of the joints of the little finger. A labourer had some time before came across a bag containing something which emitted a very disagreeable odour. He did not examine the contents of the bag at the time, but threw it into a heap and it was afterwards found to contain a large amount of ballast. Information was given to the police and the ballast is being searched for the bag which it is expected will be found to contain other portions of a woman's body. The ballast was shipped at Millwall about a week before the arrival of the vessel in the Tees.

socialist, and hardly any of the subjects of favour or dis-
 so varied a world. Unlike almost every other
 poet, Mr. Browning knew everybody and
 went everywhere. Society never seemed to
 fatigue him, or to interfere with his power
 of work. Robert Browning was born at
 Camberwell on May 7th, 1812, and had thus
 completed his 77th year. His father was a clerk

tutor at home and attended lectures at University College; after which he went for a tour abroad, and on returning mixed with the literary society of his day, Dickens, Talfourd, &c., among whom he took rank as a musician and a dilettante as well as poet. His first poem was published in 1833, when he was 21,—"Pandine: a Fragment of a Confession." The cost of publication—£30—was supplied by a kind aunt. In 1834 the poet spent some time in Russia, and in 1835 issued his "Paracelsus," a dramatic poem of over 4,000 lines, in five parts. In 1837 he wrote for Macready (who produced it at Covent Garden on the 10th of May) his first tragedy, "The Howard," and published it in the same year. On the 12th of September, 1841, Mr. Browning married the poetess, Elizabeth Barrett, and at once took her abroad and settled with her at Florence, which, with occasional visits to England, was their home for almost fifteen years of happy married life, during which the husband tended the wife's frail and delicate health with untiring assiduity. In 1861 he lost his wife, and after burying her in Florence, the white rose gariand he wore on her feet, the crown of laurel at her head," he brought his son to London and settled close to his wife's sister, in order that his child, the

Wednesday last.

SEVENTY LOVE LETTERS.

The Helensburgh breach of promise case has been before Sheriff Muir in the Dumbarton Sheriff Court, on an order for proof. The pursuer is Gertrude Kusling, housemaid, Ferndren, Sutherland-crescent, Helensburgh, and the defender Peter Matthewson, grocer's assistant, East Princes-street there. The pursuer is 29 years of age, claims £500 for breach of promise of marriage from the defender, who is 19 years of age, and says he is earning 20s. a week. The defender was absent.—The sheriff asked if the defender had been cited, and Mr. Cairns, who appeared for the pursuer, said he had not been cited, so he relied upon his attending.—The sheriff said it was very rare in such a case of breach of promise for the pursuer to attend.—Mr.

means to the defender's oath.—The sheriff asked that the joint minute to that effect should be lodged. This was done, and a new diet fixed for the 17th inst. The process in the action contains a large bundle of love letters, seventy in number, written by the defender to the pursuer in the

A girl named Robinson, whose leg was cut off in the Armagh railway accident, has received £1,000 compensation from the Great Northern of Ireland Railway Company.

INFLUENZA AMONG HORSES.

A peculiar form of influenza, popularly known as "pink eye," has broken out among horses. The London General Omnibus Company are sufferers to a large extent, as are also several of the leading carriers of London. At the Holloway yard of the London General Omnibus Company, the principal station in the northern district, out of 600 animals nearly sixty are now being treated for catarrh and other complaints. Professor Axe, of the Royal Veterinary College, Camden Town, says the disease commenced about six weeks ago, and appears to have passed through the north and south of England. It is a form of influenza which periodically prevails among horses as an epidemic disease, and usually commenced in the spring with sudden and extreme prostration. The affected animal becomes dull and lethargic in its movements, sometimes amounting to unsteadiness and rolling. The animal rested first one leg and then the other, and appeared to experience pains in the limbs.

case subsides in the course of three or four days, especially in the case where the animals are housed in well-ventilated and efficiently drained stables. But, where it is continued in work after it has contracted the disease, and been transferred to the contaminated atmosphere of an overcrowded stable, serious and often fatal results ensue.

THE LONDON STRIKES.-III.

(BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

Having ascertained the amount of the national income, I now turn to the question of the hours of labour. The hours of labour of the adult male worker in England, Scotland, and Ireland average twelve per day, Sundays excluded. This is inclusive of all forms of work. The total number of these workers is about 7,000,000, of whom about 4,500,000 are in full work and 1,500,000 in total or partial employment. The men who are in work would be glad enough to have their hours shortened if they could do so without suffering a corresponding diminution in their wages. But that, under present circumstances, is impossible. So long as that 1,500,000 partly unemployed men are, so to say, standing outside the gates of the factory or workshop ready to take their places, the men feel that it would be useless and suicidal for them to strike. It may be said that the numerous strikes that we see going on around us disprove this statement, but, as a matter of fact, they do not. These strikes, numerous as they are, bear but an infinitesimal proportion to the vast industry of the country, and are exceptions to the rule. Moreover, they ought, by all the laws of the game, to have one and all failed utterly. For example, for it is unquestionable that the places of the strikers could have been filled ten times over by men who would have been only too glad to accept the 5d. an hour if they had been permitted to do so. But they were not permitted. And why? Simply because Mr. John Burns and his colleagues set up another law, a law of their own, which said that the outside should not take the place of the inside, and took care that that lawless decree was enforced. And how came it to pass that Mr. Burns and his colleagues were allowed to act in this high-handed manner? Simply because they put their case, the case of the dockers, in such a way before the public as to enlist the sympathies of the public on their side and against their opponents, the dock directors. The press also took the side of the dockers, and the Government and police authorities anxious to win favour with the masses, took up an attitude of benevolent neutrality. During the six weeks that the struggle lasted the law of the strike committee was the only law known in the strike district, and that is how the battle was won. But it is as certain as anything can be that, if this extraordinary conjuncture of favourable circumstances had not been created—if, in other words, the battle had been fought under the ordinary conditions of the dockers' war, it would have been utterly defeated. This fact is thoroughly understood by the working men themselves, and as they cannot expect in every strike the favourable conditions which saved the dockers from destruction, each body of workmen, in their several trades and districts, shrink from the dangerous enterprise.

But, while shrinking from an encounter with their employers, because of the dangers to themselves that that encounter would involve, the workmen are quite ready—in fact, most anxious—to take whatever action can be taken to remove the element of danger from that encounter. And as that danger arises wholly from the existence of men out of work and anxious to get it, the workmen have come to the conclusion that the first thing to do, if they want to be in a position to fight their employers with a fair chance of success, is to find employment for these unemployed men. But how is that to be done? By an increased demand in our foreign markets? That, under the existing conditions of the world, is not easily effected to such an extent as would appreciably relieve the glut in the English labour market. It is, moreover, a task for our merchants, and lies outside the immediate sphere of the workers. By an increased demand in our home markets? Partly in that way, say the workers, and partly by assigning to the now unemployed a proportionate share of the existing employment. Taking the latter point first, they say, reduce our present hours from twelve to eight per day, and give the four hours' labour from which we are relieved to our unemployed brethren. These last, being then in the receipt of wages, will purchase for themselves and families many things which they now cannot buy, and thus a great impetus will be given to our home markets. As to the method by which the shortening of the hours of labour is to be effected, there is still some difference of opinion. Many of the oldest and most influential of the trades union officials are in favour of the question being left to the separate action of the unions, while the younger spirits, more go-ahead, are all for legislation. The chief objection put forward to the first-named method is that it does not diminish the dangers which now await the workers in an encounter with their employers, and which dangers the men are naturally most anxious to avoid. In their efforts to extend their employment hours eight hours' day by their own separate and independent exertions, union after union, it is said, would break itself into dust, exhaust its funds, and bring suffering and hardship upon its members. We can all understand and sympathize with an old trades union official, proud of his trade society and of the good work it has done, clinging to the belief that it will be equal to any task that may be assigned to it. But in this matter he appears to be over-zealous. The workmen, as we have seen far beyond the powers of his old-fashioned machine. The dockers' strike is, as I have explained, no precedent for him to go upon, and its success should not be allowed to kindle any illusions on the subject. Indeed, as a matter of fact, I may mention that all the leaders of that strike are unanimous and emphatic in support of an eight hours' bill. The advantages of the legislative method, on the other hand, said by its advocates to be firstly, that it will bring about the reform quicker than any other method could; secondly, that when brought about, the reform will be complete and general for all trades, not partial for one or two trades only; and, thirdly, that the legislative method ensures that the settlement shall be peaceful, rational, and just to all parties interested so far as these conditions can be ensured. In the House of Commons both sides will have a fair hearing, and the Government will make out the best case for itself which will probably be able to command a majority in its favour. There will be no mobbing of willing workers on the one side, nor starvation on the other, to force a settlement or give a bias to the scales of justice. Right shall be done as between the two contending parties, the general community being itself the dispassionate and disinterested arbitrator.

We now come to the question, Can the workers' demands be conceded? That is to say, can the demands now put forward by the strikers in London and the provinces for a general diminution in the hours of labour and, in some cases, for an increase of wages, be conceded consistently with justice to all parties and the general welfare of the country? And on that question I shall leave my readers to form their own judgments. My task is simply to state the facts of the problem and the arguments that are used on the one side and on the other. These facts are (1) The total annual income of the country; (2) The respective numbers of the producers and consumers; (3) The proportions in which that income is divided between producers and consumers; (4) The number of the workers; (5) The proportion of the unemployed to the employed workers; (6) The average hours of labour of the employed workers; and (7) The specific demands themselves. All these matters I have carefully set forth, so that my readers are now in a position to form their own conclusions on the whole question. There is, however, one other subject to be taken into consideration in connection with those I have enumerated, and it is a vital one. I mean the subject of foreign competition. However carefully we arrange our internal plans, however equitably we adjust the relations of our own producers and consumers, the whole industrial machine will continue out of gear, and the whole industrial population of England will continue in poverty, unless and until this question of foreign competition is taken in hand by our rulers and boldly grappled with. The objection to foreign competition is not

a mere national prejudice. It is based on the fact, not that the competition is foreign, but that it is unfair. Englishmen are not afraid of competition. They are rather disposed to court it, as witness all their national sports. Least of all, do they fear the competition of the foreigner when that competition is fair. But the foreign competition in trade, which has been introduced into the country, is not fair, and that is why we object to it. And that unfair competition of the foreigner affects, vitally, the position of the English workman, although, curiously enough, the majority of English workmen seem only to be awakening to the fact. This is the more strange, seeing that the very basis of English trade unions, their raison d'être, is self-protection. But the explanation of the anomaly is not difficult. It lies in the fact that the workmen have always looked upon the Liberal party as their friends, and our present one-sided fiscal arrangements are, for their own purposes approved and defended by the leading lights of that party, and that the innocent, combing, British workman cannot bring himself to doubt either the wisdom or the disinterestedness of his friends of the Manchester school. There are now, however, signs that the period of these illusions is ending, and that the English workman is beginning to find out one of the English workman, and that his shoe pinches him. In my next week's article I shall return to this subject of foreign competition and show how it affects the question of conceding the demands of the workers, and, indeed, the whole position of the English working class.

A FEMALE BURGLAR.

Catherine Myers, 25, servant, who said she had no fixed abode, was charged before Mr. Haden Ormer, at Dalston, with breaking into the 6th inst., the dwelling-house, No. 71, Maudslayi, Canterbury, and stealing therefrom an electro-plated cruet-stand, twelve electro-plated napkin-rings, a gold watch and chain, a pair of opera-glasses, and other articles, of the total value of £15, the property of Mr. Louis Cohen. The prosecutor said the prisoner had been in his employ as a servant, but she only stayed a few days, then leaving on pretence that she was unable to agree with her fellow-servant. After she was gone, however, bottles of wine and brandy and cigars were missed, and on information being given to the police the prisoner was arrested and sentenced to twenty-one days' hard labour. On Sunday night last the house was securely fastened up, special attention being paid to the coal cellar, which communicated with the front garden, and in which the day before a female had been observed by one of the servants. On Monday morning, however, it was found that the house had been broken into, and the articles mentioned in the charge were missing. Isabella Roberts, the servant who saw a woman in the garden, said that when they afterwards searched the garden they found a woman's bonnet. This bonnet was kept in the kitchen, and, after the burglary on Monday morning, it was missed. Subsequently she saw the prisoner leave an unoccupied house in Marquis Grove, wearing the bonnet. She pointed her out to Constable 322 J, and he arrested her. Constable Gallagher, 274 N, said he searched this unoccupied house. It had, apparently, been made a residence of by the prisoner. The opera-glasses and napkin-rings were found in one of the drawers, and the prisoner said she had pledged the cruet and watch and chain, but she did not know where. Henry King, assistant to Messrs. Hills, pawnbrokers, of Gray's Inn-road, now produced the cruet and watch and chain, which he said the prisoner had pledged for £2 10s on Monday. Detective-sergeant Drew said he saw the prisoner at the station on the 10th, and she said, "There was another girl with me. She has also been in Mr. Cohen's service, and knew more about the house than I did. It was she who broke open the cellar door with the iron bar." Mr. Ormer committed the accused to the Old Bailey for trial.

A GOOD STORY OF HUMBOLDT.

A correspondent forwards the following highly amusing and hitherto unpublished anecdote of Alexander von Humboldt, the German traveller and savant. It was in 1820, during Humboldt's trip through Siberia for the purpose of making astronomical observations. He visited the town of Ischim, in the district of Tobolsk, and although provided with the highest recommendations, he excited the suspicion of the local prefect of police, who addressed the subjoined despatch to the governor-general:—"A few days ago there arrived here a German, of shortish stature, insignificant appearance, fussy, and bearing a letter of introduction from your excellency to me. I acquainted him through the police, and he must say I find him suspicious and even dangerous. I disliked him from the first. He talks too much, and despises my hospitality. He pays no attention to the leading officials of the town, and associates with Poles and other political criminals. I take the liberty of informing your excellency that his intercourse with political criminals does not escape my vigilance. On one occasion he proceeded with them to a hill overlooking the town. They took a box with them and got out of it an instrument shaped like a long tube, which we all took for a gun. After fastening it to three feet they pointed it down on the town, and one after the other examined whether it was properly sighted. This was evidently a great danger for the town, which is built entirely of wood, so I sent a detachment of troops with loaded rifles to watch the German on the hill. If the treacherous machinations of this man justify my suspicions, we shall be ready to give our lives for Tsar and Holy Russia. I send this despatch to your excellency by special messenger."

A REMARKABLE CASE.

At Lincoln Assizes, before Mr. Justice Wills, Joseph Turner, 42, shoemaker, was charged with the wilful murder of his son, Joseph M. Turner, at Alford, Lincolnshire, on October 30th.—The prisoner was living with his brother at Alford, and on the night of October 29th they had some angry words. The prisoner called up his son, nine years of age, who was in bed, and left the house, and that night father and son were shot. Next day the brother tried, unavailingly, to effect a reconciliation. At one o'clock on the morning of October 31st the prisoner knocked at his brother's door. His clothes were saturated with water and his face bespattered with mud. He said he had walked into a pond, and that he had left the boy at his uncle's house. While the prisoner was still in bed, the brother received a letter in the prisoner's handwriting, in which it was stated that the bodies of himself and his son would be found in the brick pit at the bottom of the field. The dead body of the boy was found drowned in a disused brick pit.—The defence was that the prisoner was not at the time responsible for his actions.—The jury returned a verdict of guilty, with a recommendation to mercy on account of the depressed state of the prisoner's mind.—Sentence of death was passed.

THE SITUATION IN BRAZIL.

The manager of the Banco Nacional do Brazil in London, communicating by telegram to his directors in Rio de Janeiro the unfavorable comments of the public press in this country concerning the possible instability of the situation in Brazil arising from the events of the 10th of November last, has received the following telegraphic reply:—"There is no reason for press comments. Complete tranquillity prevails. Entire confidence in Government and everything progressing well." And a further telegram states as regards the rate of exchange:—"All banks have adopted 274d. as the official rate for drafts on bankers; commercial paper, 277-1/2d."

Clyde timber merchants report a very large consumption of timber. The quantity of pitch pine that is being used exceeds anything hitherto known. There is also a very extensive business in teak wood, and the great activity in the ship building and other industries of the district is accepted as a guarantee that the prosperity in the timber trade will be prolonged.

THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.

Outbreak in West London.

Inquiries instituted in the neighbourhoods of Chiswick, Gunpowder, and Turnham Green establish the fact that the influenza epidemic, similar to that which has appeared in Russia, though of a somewhat milder type, has shown itself in some districts of the West-end of London. That the disease, which is pronounced to be of a contagious character, has prevailed in various parts of London is to be found in the facts embodied in a statement by Dr. W. Gordon Hoag, who says that during the last ten years, at the autumn approaches, the prevailing kind of illness has been a mild form of this very influenza of the Russian type. In his opinion, the symptoms have been increasing in severity during that period, and he has never seen them so acute as they have been during the past autumn. Very few families in Bedford Park and Chiswick have escaped the complaint.

SHOOTING A JUDGE.

Armed, the German dentist who attempted to murder Judge Bristowe by shooting him with a revolver at the Great Northern Station, Nottingham, on November 19th, has been again brought before the local magistrates.—The solicitor for the prosecution stated that his honour was still in too unsatisfactory a condition to permit his attending to give evidence.—The house surgeon at the hospital where the judge remains explained that the patient is out of immediate danger, but risk to life still exists.

A PLAGUE OF RATS.

East Lothian is at present suffering from a serious plague of rats. Sir David Baird, of Newburgh, has summoned a meeting to be held in Haddington, to devise measures to deal with the vermin. Rats have been killed in hundreds without any apparent diminution of numbers. The potato, turnip, and other crops have been damaged and roadsides burrowed with holes.

TAXATION OF OMNIBUSES.

The Attorney-General applied to the Lord Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Mathew last week to fix a day to hear a case which involved a question in respect of the liability of omnibus proprietors to pay the hackney carriage tax of two guineas. The question was of importance, and the tax having to be paid by January 1 it was desired that it should be decided during the present sittings.

PENAL SERVITUDE FOR ARSON.

At Hereford Assizes last week, before Mr. Justice Stephen, John Sanders, aged 33 years, was sentenced to five years' penal servitude for arson. Sanders, of Hereford, was aged 40, for a similar offence was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude.

RAILWAY MEN'S DISPUTE.

The railway porters and signallers at the Great Southern and Western Railway Station, Fermo, struck on Thursday, and left their employment in a body. In the evening a telegram saying that the strike was settled was received from Cork, and Mr. Berry, the station-master, having notified this to the men, they returned to work. No goods have been received in Fermo during the past two days.

A REMARKABLE CRIMINAL.

A man, who gave the name of Edwin Eaton Fordham, but known to the police by several aliases, was charged at the Wolverhampton Stipendiary Court, with stealing 24s. from the house of a widow, Mrs. P., of the same name, who had lodgings. In reply to the question as to whether he objected to a remand, prisoner said, "Certainly not; I want to make a free confession of everything, but there isn't time now. It would take six hours to write it all down. My history will surprise you. The late Charles Peace was not in it compared with me. I have seen the inside of many of her Majesty's goals, and have committed more robberies than any other criminal in England. I want my confession taken down in full, because I may be some men suffering from my crimes." From facts in possession of the police it is quite true that the prisoner has been several times convicted. One of his latest escapades was to break into a house at Cannock, where he stole a silver watch and other articles of jewellery. From Cannock he went to Burton, pledged the watch at a pawnbroker's, and then, by ill-luck, went to lodge at the house of a married couple, who, after a few days, he had persuaded them to let him lodge in the house in full, because he was some men suffering from my crimes." From facts in possession of the police it is quite true that the prisoner has been several times convicted. One of his latest escapades was to break into a house at Cannock, where he stole a silver watch and other articles of jewellery. From Cannock he went to Burton, pledged the watch at a pawnbroker's, and then, by ill-luck, went to lodge at the house of a married couple, who, after a few days, he had persuaded them to let him lodge in the house in full, because he was some men suffering from my crimes." From facts in possession of the police it is quite true that the prisoner has been several times convicted. 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THE FIRM OF GIRDLESTONE.

A ROMANCE OF THE UNROMANTIC.

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

AUTHOR OF "MICHAEL CLARKE," "A STUDY IN SCARLET," ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

AN ADDITION TO THE HOUSE.

There were rejoicings in Phillimore Gardens over Tom's engagement, for the two old people were both heartily fond of Kate—"our Kate," as they were wont to call her. The physician shared a little at first over the idea of keeping the matter a secret from Girdlestone. A little reflection, however, showed him that there was nothing to be gained by informing him, while Kate's life, during the time that she was forced to remain under his roof, would be more tolerable as long as he was kept in ignorance of it. In the meanwhile, the lovers saw little of each other, and Tom was only consoled by the thought that every day which passed brought him nearer to the time when he could claim his prize without concealment or fear. He went about as happy and as light-hearted as a man can be when he is so long separated from the woman he loves. His mother was delighted at his high spirits, but his bluff old father was not so well satisfied. "Confound the lad!" he said to himself. "He is settling down to a life of idleness. It suits him too well. We must get him to choose one way or the other."

Accordingly, after breakfast one morning, the doctor asked his son to step with him into the library, where he lit his long cherry-wood pipe, as was his custom after every meal, and smoked for some time in silence. "You must do something to keep you from mischief, my boy," he said at last, brusquely.

"I'm ready for anything, dad," replied Tom. "But I don't quite see what I am fitted for."

"First of all, what do you think of this?" the doctor asked abruptly, handing a letter over to his son, who opened it, and read as follows:—

"Dear sir,—It has come to my knowledge through my son that your boy has abandoned the study of medicine, and that you are still uncertain as to his future career. I have long had the intention of seeking a young man who might join our business, and relieve my old shoulders of some of the burden. Ezra urges me to write and propose that your son should become one of us. If he has any taste for business we shall be happy to advance his interest in every way. He would, of course, have to purchase a share in the concern, which would amount to seven thousand pounds, on which he would be paid interest at the rate of five per cent. By allowing this interest to accumulate, and investing also his share of the profits, he might in time absorb a large portion of the business. In case he joined us upon this footing we should have no objection to his name appearing as one of the firm. Should the idea commend itself to you, I should be most happy to talk over details, and to explain to you the advantages which the firm can offer, at my office in Fenchurch-street, any day between ten and four."

"With kind regards to your family, and hoping that they enjoy the great blessing of health, I remain, sincerely yours,

"JOHN GIRDLESTONE."

"What do you think of that?" the doctor asked when his son had finished reading it.

"I hardly know," said Tom. "I should like a little time to think it over."

"Seven thousand pounds is a good round sum. It is more than half the total capital which I have invested for you. On the other hand, I have heard those who ought to know say there is not a sounder or better managed concern in London. There's no time like the present, Tom. Get your hat, and we'll go down to Fenchurch-street together and look it over."

While father and son were rattling along in a cab from Kensington to the City, the young man had time to turn the matter over in his mind. He wanted to be at work, and why not take this up as well as anything else. It is true that he disliked what he had heard of both the Girdlestons, but, on the other hand, by becoming a member of the firm he would probably be thrown in the way of meeting the old merchant's ward. This last consideration decided the matter, and long before the cab had pulled up at the long and dirty passage which led to the offices of the great African firm, the party principally interested had fully made up his mind as to the course he should adopt.

They were duly ushered into the small sanctum adorned with the dissected ships, the maps, the charts, the lists of sailing, and the water-colour picture of the barque Bolinda, where they were received by the head of the firm. With a charming personal modesty, tempered by a becoming pride in the great business which he had himself created, there sat the elderly man, whose face was the picture of a great success. He took down ledgers and flashed great rows of figures before the eyes of the good doctor, explaining, at the same time, how month after month their receipts increased and their capital grew. Then he spoke touchingly of his own ripe years, and of the quiet and seclusion which he looked forward to after his busy lifetime.

"With my young friend here," he said, patting Tom affectionately on the shoulder, "and my own boy, Ezra, both working together, there will be young blood and life in the concern. They will bring the energy and when they want advice they can come to the old man for it. I intend in a year or so, when the new arrangement works smoothly, to have a run over to Palestine. It may seem a weakness to you, but my life I have hoped some day to stand upon that holy ground, and to look down on those scenes which we have all imagined to ourselves. Your son will start with a good position and a fair income, which he will probably double before his five years are over. The money invested by him is simply to ensure that he shall have a substantial interest in promoting the affairs of the firm." Thus the old man ran on, and when Tom and his father left the office with the sound of great sums of money, and huge profits, and heavy balances, and safe investments all jostling each other in their brains, they had both made up their minds as to the future.

Hence, in a couple of days there was a stir in the legal house of Jones, Morgan, and Co., with much rustling of parchment, and signing of names, and drinking of inferior sherry. The result of all which was that the firm of Girdlestone and Co. were seven thousand pounds the richer, and Thomas Dimdale found himself a recognised member of a great commercial house, with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.

"A good day's work," said the old doctor, as they left the lawyer's office together. "You have now taken an irrevocable step in life, my boy. The world is before you. You belong to a first-class firm and you have every chance. May you thrive and prosper."

"If I don't it won't be my fault," Tom answered with decision. "I shall work with my whole heart and soul."

"A good day's work, Ezra," the African merchant was remarking at that very moment in Fenchurch-street. "The firm is pinched again for working expenses. This will help, and he threw a little slip of green paper across the table to his son.

"It will help us for a time," Ezra said, gloomily glancing at the figures. "It was fortunate that I was able to put you on it, unless this diamond spec comes off, nothing can save us."

"But it shall come off," his father answered. "But he succeeded in obtaining an agent who appeared to be almost as well fitted for the post as the recalcitrant major. This worthy had started off already for Russia, where the scene of his operations was to lie.

"I hope so," said Ezra. "We have neglected no precaution. Langworthy should be at Tobolsk

by this time. I saw that he had a bag of rough stones with him which would do well enough for his purpose."

"We have your money ready, too. I can rely upon rather over thirty thousand pounds. Our credit was good for that, but I did not wish to push it too far, for fear of setting tongues wagging."

"I am thinking of starting shortly in the mail boat 'Cyprus,' said Ezra. "I should be at the diamond fields in little more than a month. I dare say Langworthy won't show any signs for some time yet, but I may as well be there as here. It will give me a little while to find my way about. You see, if the tidings and I were to come almost simultaneously, it might arouse suspicions. In the meantime, no one knows our little game."

"Except your friend, Clutterbuck."

A dark shadow passed over Ezra's handsome face, and his cruel lip tightened in a way which boded little good to the old soldier should he ever lie at his mercy.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIRST STEP.

It was a proud day for the ex-medical student when he first entered the counting-house of the African firm and realised that he was one of the governing powers in that busy establishment. One and although he had found the study of the abstract sciences an irksome matter, he was able to throw himself into business with uncommon energy and devotion. The clerks soon found that the sunburned, athletic-looking young man intended to be anything but a sleeping partner, and both they and old Gilray respected him accordingly.

The latter had at first been inclined to resent the new arrangement as far as his gentle, down-trodden nature could resent anything. Hitherto he had been the monarch of the counting-house in the absence of the Girdlestons, but now a higher desk had been erected in a more central portion of the room, and this was for the accommodation of the new-comer. Gilray, after his thirty years of service, felt this usurpation of his rights very keenly, but there was such a simple kindness about the new arrangement that he was glad to give assistance in his new duties, that the old clerk's resentment soon melted away.

A little incident occurred which strengthened this kindly feeling. It chanced that some few days after Tom's first appearance in the office several of the clerks, who had not yet quite guessed what manner of man this young gentleman might be, took advantage of the absence of the Girdlestons to take a rise out of the manager. One of them, a great rawboned Scotchman, named McCallister, after one or two mock exhibitions of wit concluded by dropping a heavy stool over the partition of the old man's desk in such a way that it crashed down upon his head as he sat stooping over his writing. Tom, who had been watching the proceedings with a baleful eye, sprang off his stool and made across the office at the offender. McCallister seemed inclined for a moment to brash it out, but there was a dangerous glint about Tom's forehead, and a flash of his natural, but the junior stood actually take the matter into his own hands and execute lynch law then and there, was altogether a new phenomenon. From that day Tom acquired a great ascendancy in the office, and Gilray became his devoted slave. This friendship with the old clerk proved to be very useful, for by means of his shrewd hints and patient teaching the new-comer gained a grasp of the business which he could not have attained by any other method.

Girdlestone called him into the office one day, and congratulated him upon the progress which he was making. "My dear young man," he said to him in his patriarchal way, "I am delighted to hear of the way in which you identify yourself with the interests of the firm. If at first you find work allotted to you which may appear to you to be rather menial, you must understand that that is simply due to our desire that you should master the whole business from its very foundations."

"There is nothing I desire better," said Tom. "In addition to the routine of office work, and the superintendence of the clerks, I should wish you to have a thorough grasp of all the details of the shipping, and of the loading and unloading of our vessels, as well as of the storage of goods when landed. When any of our ships are in, I should wish you to go down to the docks and to overlook everything which is done."

Tom bowed and congratulated himself inwardly upon these new duties, which promised to be instructive.

"As you grow older," said the senior partner, "you will find it of inestimable value that you have had practical experience of what your subordinates have to do. My whole life has taught me that. When you are in doubt upon any subject you can ask Ezra for assistance and advice. He is a young man whom you might call a fish of the sea, but he has great business capacity. When he has gone to Africa you can come to me if there is anything which you do not understand."

John Girdlestone appeared to be so kindly and benevolent during this and other interviews, that Tom's heart warmed towards him, and he came to the conclusion that his father had judged the old merchant harshly. More than once, so impressed was he by his kindness, that he was on the point of disclosing to him his engagement to his ward, but on the occasion there arose within him a lively recollection of Kate's frightened face when he had suggested such a course, and he felt that without her consent he had no right to divulge the secret.

If the elder Girdlestone improved upon acquaintance it was exactly the reverse with his son Ezra. The dislike with which Tom had originally regarded him deepened as he came in closer contact, and that they held but little intercourse together. Ezra had taken into his own charge all the financial part of the concern, and guarded it the more jealously when he realised that the new partner was so much less simple than he had expected. Thus, Tom had no opportunity of asserting for himself how the affairs of the firm stood, but believed implicitly in what old Gilray, that every outlay was bringing in a large and remunerative return. Very astonished would both of them have been had they realised that the working expenses were at present being paid entirely from their own capital until such time as the plot should ripen which was to restore the fortunes of the African company.

In one respect Tom Dimdale was immeasurably the gainer by his connection with the firm, for without it it is difficult to say how he could have found opportunities for breaking through the barrier which separated him from Kate. The surveillance of the merchant had become stricter of late, and all invitations from Mrs. Dimdale or other friends who pitied the loneliness of the girl were repulsed by Girdlestone with the cunning determination that his ward's health was not such as to justify him in allowing her to incur any risk of catching a chill. She was practically a prisoner in the great stone cage in Eccleston-square, and even on her walks a warder in the shape of a footman was, as we have seen, told off to guard her. Whatever John Girdlestone's reasons may have been, he had evidently come to the conclusion that it was of the highest importance that she should be kept secluded.

As it was, Tom, thanks to his position as one of the firm, was able occasionally, in spite of every precaution, to penetrate through the old man's defensive works. If a question of importance arose at Fenchurch-street during the absence of the senior partner, what more natural than that Mr. Dimdale should volunteer to walk round in Eccleston-square in order to acquaint him with the fact. And if it happened that the gentleman

was not to be found there, how very natural that the young man should wait half an hour for him, and that Miss Harston should take the opportunity of a chat with an old friend? Precious to the young man was the more so for their rarity. They brightened the dull routine of Kate's weary life, and sent Tom back to the office full of spirit and hope. The days were at hand when the memory of them was to shine out like little rifts of light in the dark cloud of existence.

And now the time was coming when it was to be decided whether, by a last bold stroke, the credit of the house of Girdlestone was to be saved, or whether the attempt was to plunge them into deeper and more hopeless ruin. An unscrupulous agent named Langworthy had, as already indicated, been despatched to Russia well primed with instructions as to what to do and how to do it. He had been in the employ of an English corn merchant at Odessa, and had some knowledge of the Russian language which would be invaluable to him in his undertaking. In a character of an English gentleman of scientific tastes he was to establish himself in some convenient village among the Ural Mountains. There he was to remain some little time, so as to arouse confidence in the people before making his pretended discovery. He was then to carry his rough diamonds to Tobolsk, as the nearest large town, and to exhibit them there, backing up his assertion by the evidence of villagers who had seen him dig them up. The Girdlestons knew that that alone would be sufficient when telegraphed to England to produce a panic in the sensitive diamond market. Before any systematic inquiry could be made, Langworthy would have disappeared, and their little speculation would have come off. After that the sooner people realised that it was a hoax the better for the conspirators. In any case, there seemed to be no possibility that the origin of the rumour could be traced. Meanwhile, Ezra Girdlestone had secured his passage in the Cape mail steamer 'Cyprus.' On the night that he left he sat up some time in the library at Eccleston-square talking over the matter for the last time with his father.

The old man was pale and nervous. The one weak point in his character was his affection for his son, an affection which he strove to hide under an austere manner, but which was none the less genuine. He had never before parted with him for any length of time, and he felt the wrench keenly. As to Ezra, he was flushed and excited at the thought of the new scenes which lay before him and the daring speculation in which he was about to engage. He was full of life and energy, and he was not a man to be daunted by a single misadventure.

"I know as much about stones," he said excitedly, "as any man in London. I am pricing a bag of rough ones at Van Helmer's to-day, and he is reckoned a good judge. He said that no expert could have done it better. Lord bless you, pure, or splintered, or cracked, or off colour, or spotted, or twin stones, I'm up to them all! I wasn't a pound out in the market value of any one of them."

"You deserve great credit for your quickness and perseverance," replied his father. "Your weak point will be that you will let them know you are at the fields. Be careful of yourself when you are there, my son, if only for my sake. There are rough fellows at such places, and you must give them soft words. I know that your temper is quick, but remember those wise words, 'He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city.'"

"Never fear for me, dad," said Ezra, with a sinister smile, pointing to a small leather case which lay among his things. "That's the best of it. I can get out of there if I want to. I've taken a tip, you see, from our good friend, the major, and have six answers for any one that wants to argue with me. If I had had that the other day he wouldn't have bounced me so easily."

"Nay, but Ezra, Ezra," his father said in great agitation, "you will promise to be careful and to avoid quarrels and bloodshed. It is against the great law, the new commandment."

"I won't get into any rows if I can help it," his son assured him. "That's not my game."

"But if you think that there is no mistake, if your opponent is undoubtedly about to proceed to extremities, shoot him down at once, my dear lad, before he has time to draw. I have heard those who have been out there say that in such cases everything depends upon getting the first shot. I am anxious about you, and shall not be easy until I see you again."

"Blessed if he hasn't tears in his eyes!" Ezra exclaimed to himself, much astonished at this unprepared occurrence.

"When do you go?" his father asked.

"My train leaves in an hour or so. I reach the steamer at Southampton about three in the morning, and she starts with the full tide at six."

"Look after your health," the old man continued. "Don't get your feet wet, and wear flannel next your skin. Don't forget your religious duties either. It has a good effect upon those among whom you do business."

Ezra sprang from his chair with an exclamation of disgust, and began to pace up and down. "I wish to heaven you would drop that sort of gammon when we are alone," he said irritably.

"My dear boy," said the father with a mild look of surprise upon his face, "you seem to be under a misapprehension in this matter. You appear to consider that we are embarking upon some unjustifiable undertaking. This is not so. What we are doing is simply a small commercial ruse—a finesse. It is a recognised maxim of trade to endeavour to depreciate the price of whatever you want to buy, and to raise it again when the time comes for selling."

"It's steering very close to the law," his son retorted. "No speculating, now, while I am away; whatever comes in must go towards getting us out of this scrape, not to plunging us deeper in the mire."

"I shall not expend an unnecessary penny," he said. "Well, then good-bye," said the young man, rising up and holding out his hand. "Keep your eye on Dimdale and don't trust him."

"Good-bye, my son, good-bye," said the old man, and he stood motionless, and his voice quavered as he spoke. He stood motionless for a minute or so until the heavy door slammed, and then he threw open the window and gazed sorrowfully down the street at the disappearing cab. His whole attitude expressed such dejection that his ward, who had just entered the room, felt more drawn towards him than she had ever done before. Slipping up to him she placed her warm tender hand upon his cheek, and he turned to her with a look of grateful surprise.

"He will soon come back, dear Mr. Girdlestone," she said.

As she stood beside him in her white dress, with a single red ribbon round her neck and a band of the same colour round her waist, she was as fair a specimen of English girlhood as could have been found in all London. The merchant's features softened as he looked down at her fresh young face, and he put out his hand as though to caress her, but some unpleasant thought must have crossed his mind, for he assumed suddenly a hard and stern expression, and he turned away without a word. More than once that night she recalled that strange spasmodic expression of something akin to horror which had passed over her guardian's features as he gazed at her.

(To be continued.)

"Mrs. LEACH'S FAMILY DRESSMAKER" CHRISTMAS NUMBER contains a full and complete list of Fancy Costumes and Fifty Illustrations of Winter Garments, Coats, Toilets, and Useful Information. Price 3d. A lady, writing on dress-making, says:—"I am very much indebted to Mrs. LEACH'S FAMILY DRESSMAKER for January, for it has been found in all London. The merchant's features softened as he looked down at her fresh young face, and he put out his hand as though to caress her, but some unpleasant thought must have crossed his mind, for he assumed suddenly a hard and stern expression, and he turned away without a word. More than once that night she recalled that strange spasmodic expression of something akin to horror which had passed over her guardian's features as he gazed at her."

GIVEN AWAY 100 WAX DOLLS, also a Paper Pattern, with Forty Illustrations of Winter Garments for Girls and Young Ladies of all ages, and a full list of the latest styles in dress-making. Price 1d. All the New Wailes and Set Dances; Hints on the Toilet, Fancy Costumes, &c. Post free, three stamps. A Small Pocket Edition, bound in cloth, 3d. per copy, seven stamps in advance. —S. C. CRAWFORD & SONS, 4, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C. —[Advt.]

A MURDEROUS ATTACK.

A retired tradesman named Pigeon, living at Billancourt, who, despite his 69 years, continued to cringe a deplorable weakness for the society of frivolous females, was nearly murdered on Monday by one of his favourites, a washerwoman out of work. Pigeon had just gone to bed when he heard a knock at the door of his suburban tenement. On opening he found outside his laundry nymph, Louise Milcent, and a companion, Pauline Durand, both of whom begged for a night's lodging. The hospitable Pigeon admitted them, gave them food, drink, and a shakedown, and then returned to bed. Suddenly, during the night, he felt something cold and sharp entering his shoulder, and, awaking from his slumbers, he beheld Louise Milcent standing over him holding a knife in her hand. The old man with almost superhuman energy rose up in his bed, shoved away the woman, and, with a shout, rushed for help with all his might. The two women immediately fled, leaving behind their boots and hats. Several neighbours came to the rescue of Pigeon, and it was then found that he had received a deep puncture over the shoulder blade, but his injury did not prevent him from proceeding to the local gendarmery, there to give in his statement. The two women, who had not gone far, were captured in an out-house, together with a rascal who was to assist them in their nefarious undertaking. The guilty washerwoman made a "clean breast" of the whole affair, and revealed the bloodthirsty plot concocted by her companions and herself. She was to stab Pigeon, and if she could not finish him her friend Pauline was to assist her in the murder. Then the male confederate was to be called in to help in arranging the body so that it should seem as if Pigeon had committed suicide, and the old man's place was to be pillaged by the trio, who hoped to be able to escape from Billancourt in the small hours of the morning. The three criminals were sent to the Central Police Station.

POISONING A FAMILY.

A terrible domestic drama is reported from Nice. It happened in the family of a person named Martini, described as a painter, who lived with his sister-in-law and four children, in the Rue de la Fontaine. The eldest son of Martini, a youth of 17, had frequent quarrels with his aunt, who put poison in his cup of coffee the other morning. The boy saw her throw the strange substance into his drink, and, without saying a word, he put some of the stuff secretly into the cups of all the members of the family. The aunt was the first to succumb to the effects of the poison. The boy died next, having declared to the doctor that he knew his aunt had long wanted to poison him, and that, not caring to die alone, he had shared the deleterious substance placed in his cup of coffee with all the members of his family, of whom only the head and one of his children are now alive. Martini and his surviving child, however, are expected to recover.

LIBELLING A VICAR.

At Woolwich Police Court, Henry Hayward, of 13, Francis-street, Plumstead Common, was summoned before Mr. Kennedy for libelling the Rev. J. W. Horsley, vicar of Holy Trinity, Woolwich. —The Rev. gentleman said that for three years past he had received letters and postcards from the defendant in reference to his two daughters, who had been sent to a reformatory at Portsmouth. Witness, although connected with the Reformatory and Refuge Union, and chaplain of a prison, knew nothing of the case, and had so informed the defendant, but on the 2nd inst. he received from him a postcard on which was written:—"Rev. Mr. Horsley,—How dare you have a letter printed which Miss L.—made my girl write, without knowing the truth of the matter? It was a malicious deed, and you are no gentleman to do such a thing. Are you not afraid to get into a pulp to preach? You preach, 'Cursed is he that oppresseth the poor, and who have a curse from heaven hanging over your head. You are worse than Miss L.—that got my children from me by false pretences and wilful downright perjury. A clergyman should not shield such wickedness.—H. HAYWARD." Mr. Horsley added that he wished to stop the annoyance, but did not want to have the defendant punished.—Hayward, in reply to the charge, began a statement of his complaints, but Mr. Kennedy said he had gone fully into the matter on a previous occasion and was quite convinced that his supposed grievances were without foundation. If the defendant did not take warning he would be sent to prison. The case would be adjourned sine die, and if he again offended he would be promptly dealt with.

BARNUM'S ELEPHANT AND ITS VICTIM.

An interviewer who has been at Barnum's and has seen the elephant concerned in the recent fatal accident to a cleaner, writes:—"Nick is but a baby; he did not know what had happened, or what it meant, when he saw his attendant lying motionless and bleeding there. Mandarin did, and through all his bulky frame he shuddered visibly. One who saw it told me this. Then he lifted up his trunk and trumpeted! It was the cry which elephants utter when in pain. From that day till now, Mandarin's keeper assures me, the beast, whose heart is in proportion to his size, has resisted all attempts to play. On several days he refused his food, and stood in his stall, eyeing his ponderous head from side to side, the gigantic incarnation of melancholy. On the 6th inst. he to some extent recovered from the shock, and resumed his cheerful demeanour, but not his play."

A BURGLARY STORY.

Anent the "burglary season" a perfectly true story may not be out of place. A certain business street, not a thousand miles from Oxford Circus, forms a very happy hunting ground for the housebreaker. Indeed, it is said that there is not a door in the thoroughfare without marks of his implements of business. The fact is, that the houses in the street are mostly deserted at night by their occupants, and very much so by the police. One fine morning Mr. Z., a prominent merchant, on arriving at his office, was not surprised to find that his premises had been broken into for the third or fourth time. As on the previous occasions, the intruders had secured but little booty, though they had created a good deal of confusion by smashing locks and littering the floor with papers. An inspector of police, together with a sergeant and a constable, were already on the spot when Mr. Z. put in his appearance, accompanied by his clerk, a youth of modest demeanour. The party proceeded to the discovery of an entirely new sort of "jimmy," most likely of French or American manufacture. I shall make a special report of this case to Scotland Yard." But as the great man flourished his terrible weapon the meek clerk could stand the nonsense no longer. "Oh! please sir," he blurted out piteously, "I beg your pardon, but that's my new trousers-stretcher!"

THE TRAFFIC IN GIRLS.

Sarah Kitzers, 21, of Thrawl-street, Spitalfields, was charged at Bow-street Police Court with attempting to procure a girl, 16 years of age, for immoral purposes.—Inspector J. Pinhorn, H Division, said the prosecution was taken out under the second clause of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.—Mary Ann Hines said that she had no father or mother, and was 16 years of age. She met the prisoner the other evening at about half-past six in the Commercial-road. The prisoner took her into public-houses and tried to persuade her to go to a house with one of the men they met.—Mr. Saunders remanded the prisoner with a view to the Treasury prosecutions.

SENTENCE OF DEATH.

At Kent Assizes on Thursday, William Thomas Hook was sentenced to death for the wilful murder of his wife at Gravesend on September 17th.

A MANUFACTURER'S PROMISE.

In the Queen's Bench Division, before Mr. Justice Cave and a common jury, an action was brought by Mr. G. Cavendish Bentinck, M.P. for Whitehaven, to recover from Mr. Robert A. Rooney, manufacturer, of Bishopsgate-street, a sum of £180 odd, upon a promise alleged to have been made by the defendant to pay one-third of the costs of a suit undertaken by Mr. Bentinck in 1883 in the interest of the debenture-holders of the Cape Breton Company. The defendant denied that he gave any guarantee to the plaintiff at all, and pleaded, among other defences, that there was no guarantee in writing to satisfy the Statute of Frauds. The suit in respect of which the alleged guarantee was given was one to compel the Cape Breton Company to restore a sum of £240,000, which, it was contended, ought to be given up to the debenture-holders. The defendant admitted having signed a letter by which he agreed with his uncle, Mr. Michael Rooney, to be bound for a sum not exceeding £200 in respect of costs in that litigation, but denied that he bound himself to anybody else. The plaintiff relied on the letter and other correspondence as evidence of the alleged contract. Evidence was given at length on both sides.—The result of the trial was a verdict for the plaintiff for the amount claimed, and judgment, with costs.

IS GOLD MINING PROFITABLE?

A contemporary remarks that gold mining is not necessarily a profitable enterprise. It is stated that a few days ago some figures were given which showed that, on the whole, gold mining has not been profitable for some time in Victoria. Some mines pay well enough, but others do not, and the unprofitable ventures quite balance the successful ones. There is reason to believe that the same thing obtains in South Africa. There are good and very profitable mines there, and those who are shareholders in them have every reason to thank their stars; but there are a great many which are not remunerative, and those who have put their money into them are not at all disposed to regard the day they did it as a red letter one in their calendar. A Johannesburg paper recently published a return showing the output of gold by all the companies which have been in a position to produce it for the period commencing with January, 1887, and ending September 30th, 1888. It showed that there were companies which have not been established two or more years, and which have produced an ounce of gold. Others have produced so little that the number of ounces can be recorded by two figures, and still others have not yielded more than can be expressed in three figures. Even if the return for October last is taken, after capital has been raised both here and there very freely, it will be found that out of more than 150 gold mining companies, whose shares are quoted on the local Exchange List, only thirty-four appear as having yielded gold. Out of these, seven contributed as nearly as may be three-fourths of the gold produced, and the remaining twenty-seven are only credited with the balance of one-fourth amongst them. As compared with the condition of things in the corresponding month of the previous year, there are now in the district many hundred heads of stamping, and more than three times the output of gold is only about 8,000 ounces greater.

THE "OLD GREAT MAN."

Mr. Gladstone's visit to Paris during the Exhibition is bearing fruit in a manner which affords a lamentable commentary on the various penalties of greatness. A highly-respectable tradesman living in a good street has organised and opened a sartorial establishment with the sign overhead of the "Old Great Man." Inside this remarkable shop Parisians of tender means may purchase for the modest sum of one pound a Gladstone overcoat, with or without one of those capes which were in so much vogue among the copperheads some time since, the whole garment being modelled, as is set forth in the prospectus, on the style adopted by "Old Great Man." The shop attracted a great deal of public attention, and so do the overcoats, and the proprietors expect to get rid of his stock before New Year's Day, thank to the "Old Great Man."

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CHRISTMAS PRESENT TO THE CHILDREN.

GARDINER AND COMPLY, will, according to custom, give away Gratis, during Christmas, a PICTURE BOOK to all applicants for Clothing, as their Annual Christmas Presents to the Children.

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your valuable column, but I should like to know if you or your numerous readers could perhaps enlighten me on the following subject. Business calling me to the East-end of London to-day, I thought I would take a walk through Petticoat-lane. I presume it was marked day with the Hebrews, for the lanes were thronged with Jews, and I saw many of the latter standing about thirty large baskets of pike, perch, bream, and roach. On making inquiry I was informed that these fish were imported from various parts of Holland, which to all appearances was the case. The bream and perch I took particular notice of, the latter averaging from lib. to 5lb. each. I congratulated myself to know they were taken from English waters, but on passing by I saw some very fine pike, carp, and tench, as well as a large quantity of small roach; and without any exaggeration the pike, on an average, weighed from 5lb. to 100lb. each. On making inquiry here I was told that the fish were taken from some very fine rivers, but further information I was refused. Should this be the work of Thames netmen I sincerely hope some of our esteemed friends will use their utmost influence in abolishing the use of nets as advocated by

I think "C.A.S." may set his mind at rest about the fish he saw alive, as the size of the pike, taken into consideration with the quantity of carp and tench, most conclusively points to these fish having been netted from a private lake or reservoir. The roach in all probability did come out of the Thames, and until a new bye-law is passed by the Thames Conservancy to do away with the nets, great harm will be done to the tidal fishery.

PIPER PAN.

The triumvirate, consisting of Messrs. Sullivan, Gilbert, and D'Oyly Carte, have a "strackle" in the new Sullivan-Gilbert opera, "The Gondoliers." Of all the ten operas they have jointly produced the last appears to me likely to prove the most successful. It is diverting from beginning to end, the absurd improbabilities of the plot are readily forgiven, the comic situations lead to a series of scenes which compel hearty laughter, and the drolleries invented by Mr. Gilbert are all the more welcome because they illustrate the French axiom, "It is always the unexpected that arrives." I recommend those of my readers who may be able to witness a performance of "The Gondoliers" to keep the ear closed to vocal music except when they wish to follow the vocal music, and to find a double enjoyment in the dramatic action and the witty dialogue, because the element of surprise will be preserved. Those who read the libretto beforehand discount this

Let me also recommend my readers to look out for the numerous instances in which Sir Arthur Sullivan has enlivened the opera by orchestral drolleries, as unexpected and as comic as those of Mr. Gilbert. At the same time let them pay attention to the varied charms of the orchestration in connection with the vocal music. They will be forced to laugh at the droll use of the side-

drum in the scene which introduces the Duke's Duchess of Plaza-Toro, their daughter, Casilda, and the drummer, Luiz, who constitute the entire "suite" of the penniless but haughty aristocrat and will be startled into laughter by the sudden intrusion of a hornpipe tune later on, but if they listen attentively to the whole of the orchestration they will be well repaid.

It has been stated that Miss Decima Moore, who as Casilda, made a successful first appearance on this occasion, is only 18 years old. I am informed that she is only 17 years old, and at the age of 17 won the Victoria scholarship at the Blackheath Conservatoire of Music. Her voice has not yet attained its full power, but is well produced, clear, penetrating, and sympathetic, and she seems destined to occupy a prominent place among our light sopranos.

The Lee Philharmonic Society on Tuesday last gave a meritorious performance of Handel's "Acis and Galatea." The tenor solo part, "I have a capital song by the name of tenor Mr. Harry Stubbs, of the best private choir. I find his voice better and better every time I hear him, and his elocution especially praiseworthy. The Galatea was Miss Jessie Palmer, who makes rapid progress. When I reached home, my cabman, who had been reading the posting bills while waiting for me, asked if I would kindly tell him what was "the meaning of Ases and Galyashy?"

Mr. Sims Reeves is unfortunately too unwell to fulfil all his December engagements, and is ordered to take complete rest. His illness, however, will cause great disappointment, amongst various parts of the country, but must be more distressing to him than to them. The last time I spent an evening with him he told me that his losses, owing to the delicacy of his vocal organs, amounted to nearly £100,000. I know that for many years his annual income exceeded £10,000. When I first knew him it was £200 per annum, and what a rich, lovely voice he then had.

Hervé, the composer of "Chilperic," "Le Pe Faust," "L'Etil Crevé," &c., has been for some time a confirmed Englishman. I was one of his two sponsors, and when he retired to the charming villa which he had bought, not far from my residence, he told me that he intended to devote his (well-earned) leisure to the musical education of his son, Louis, who exhibits remarkable promise. It seems, however, that such tempting terms have been offered by the English for the purpose of inducing Hervé to write for them. I have of some time been waiting to see whether he will accept of the offer, but he has sold his English rights to the English, and taken a suite of rooms in the Rue Lafayette, Paris. He writes me, however, that he will return to England next season.

At Maidenhead, on the 9th inst., the marine trawlers were occupied for several hours investigating the charge of assault brought against Mr. A. Hewitt, agent to Mrs. Smith, of The Fishermen, Maidenhead, by James Andrews, a professional fisherman. It will be remembered that on November 26th, Andrews, accompanied by his patron, was fishing in the district of Maidenhead, and was charged with the offence of poaching, the fishing of which is claimed by Mrs. Smith. When Mr. Hewitt, with several others, went to the punts to him and demanded his tackle. Upon Andrews refusing, a wrangle seems to have taken place, and ultimately Mr. Hewitt boarded Andrews's punt, struck him, and pushed him into the river, falling over, and for a time he was supposed to be dead. It was found, however, that the defence was to the effect that the first blow was struck by Andrews, and that the immersion was accidental. The magistrates, however, considering the case proved, and fined Mr. Hewitt 23 shillings and costs, and bound him over to keep the peace for six months. A cross-summons against Andrews was dismissed, and Mr. Hewitt had to pay 10s.

When Mr. Frederick Cliffe's symphony in C was produced last spring at the Crystal Palace, I predicted that it would become widely popular. Since then it has been successfully performed at all the chief cities of the kingdom, and was repeated at the Crystal Palace on the 7th inst. with brilliant success, the young composer being warmly summoned to the platform and enthusiastically applauded.

Sterling has applied for admission to membership of the Society of Friends (Quakers) does not surprise me at all. It would not surprise me were she to enter a convent and take the veil, for I believe her to be sincerely devout and ready to make almost any sacrifice of her personal comfort for the sake of setting a good example before others. Whether she will look as a saint in Quaker costume in the choir, and as a stately dressmaker has usually worn remains to be seen.

Amateur composers give me much annoyance. I have just seen in the list of deaths the name of one of these gentlemen who gave me an uncomfortable half hour three years ago. He proposed to show me a MS. opera of his own composition, but forsook the thing when he called upon me. He played a few pieces, and some of them were hideous. I told him I could not spend an hour, so, to my surprise, he answered, "I have kept to the last a principal soprano aria. Pray let me play it to you," and without more ado played the most hideous of all his compositions. "There, said he, with a triumphant air, 'Mozart himself never composed such a melody as that.'" "I am sure of your opinion," I replied; "I am sure I

BUCKLAND, JUNIOR.

I was sorry to see such nonsense talked in your morning columns about the trapping of rabbits. These animals must be caught, not only for the sake of the fish and fur, but also because of the damage they do. Let ultra-humanitarians think of the Australian rabbit plague. Of all modes of rat trapping it is acknowledged by experts that the one which necessitates the use of the steel-trap or is best, if the use of this trap is to be abolished, is the use of the steel-trap. And if the use of the steel-trap is to be abolished, the use of the steel-trap is the only mode of rabbit, and a diminution in those captured, it would render the catching of vermin, such as rats, weasels, rats, &c., much more difficult, would injure the fur trade, or most small animals, as the mink, are caught in this manner. Again, the well-meaning but too sentimental

the surprise of Lady Frank, and has ever been able to find a thing for a manager (and for that matter, an actor) to have.

It was a very good-natured of Mr. Frank Farncombe, Miss Evelyn Philip, Miss Florence Wood, and Mr. Andrew Lewis to add to their evening's labours by giving a little entertainment at the Bromington Hospital on Tuesday. It may be told that the night was very successful. A few readers may have known that in the morning and afternoon of the 21st Mrs. Evelyn Philip was the champion of the Bromington Hospital, and that she was assisted by her husband, Mr. Andrew Lewis, and that she was assisted by her husband, Mr. Andrew Lewis, and that she was assisted by her husband, Mr. Andrew Lewis.

A correspondent asks me to name the last occasion on which "The Dead Heart" was produced, previous to the revival by Mr. Irving. I could not say for certain, for it may have been played at any time at one of the outlying theatres without attracting general attention. It is certain, however, that Webster appeared in it—elsewhere than at the Adelphi—some few years after its original production.

I am glad to note that Mr. Lonnen and Miss Maria Jones have been so well received in New York. They are unquestionably the cleverest members of the travelling Gaiety company, for Miss Florence St. John has not joined it yet. I does not seem to be generally known that Miss Jones, as a young girl, used to be a great favourite at the Strand in its "palmy" burlesque days. She is a real artist in travestie. Mr. Lonnen's grotesqueries are, without exception, the funniest that have been seen since Mr. Edward Terry left the Gaiety.

Mr. J. C. Gregory obliges us with another letter from Port Said. In most parts of the east the milk supply is dependent on the goats, which are driven through the streets in herds, the leader with a bell, and are milked at the door of the customer. Their favourite food is figs. Mr. Gregory tells us, to be paper. All the provision dealers use heavy coarse paper, placing a very large sheet on the scale, the paper costing them much less than the article they weigh on it, and, as it is customary in these parts to throw the refuse in the streets, quantities of this use paper lie about and are eagerly devoured by the goats. The fact is, that the chief material used in the manufacture of the paper is straw, and it is, therefore, readily digested.

GENERAL CHATTER.

Smart, indeed, is the professional mendicant in making profit out of severe weather. No sooner does a nip of frost come into the air, or a thin sheet of snow cover the ground, than he tunes his whine to a deeper pitch of misery. Occasionally, however, he forebears to mark the disappearance of frost. A bold Irish beggar, of the stalwart portation, accosted me last Monday with a supplication for charity. "I'm just perished with cold," he dolorously exclaimed, "and 't my wife and childer can't keep warm at all, at all." I ventured to remark that the temperature had become quite warm. "Bad cess 't ye, thin," he replied, flaring out violently; "if ye had an heart at all, ye'd not be noticing them things."

Charitable organisations make a great mistake when they think in terms of the language of the marketplace. I think, in wording their appeals in such sentimental language. Here is one lying before me, asking for a donation to a fund for supplying the necessities of certain West-end robbers. I gather from the context that poor children are meant. Why not have said so, then? To my way of thinking, a suffering child is an infinitely more touching and more deserving object than a suffering robin. There is no more pathetic sight on the face of God's earth than a poor little scrap of humanity tortured by the pangs of hunger.

The new Brazilian republic will, no doubt, require a fresh coat of arms. I would suggest a jaguar rampant spitting at a king. That would fairly typify Marshal Fonseca's attitude to Dom Pedro, and the jaguar being the national animal of Brazil, the design would have the proper patriotic coloring.

the Board of Trade returns for November are really splendid; by far the best that have yet appeared. Allowance has to be made, of course, for the fact that a big bump of export trade, owing to the dockers' strike, was transferred to the following month. But, after making due deductions for the astonishing increases of exports and imports, no one can dispute that England is enjoying an exceptional measure of commercial success. It is true, unless capital and labour learn to pull together. If the present unnatural hostilities continue, it is as sure as anything can be that the foreigner will cut us out of the external markets, if not in our own. To the nation, like myself, scrupulously refrain from partisanship, the suicidal warfare between employers and employed seems to presage the downfall of Great England as the greatest commercial nation in the world.

"Fool's mate," and showed how a child may, strategy, outwit a man. The child in this instance was little Gracie Murielle, who played very prettily, being cleverly assisted by Messrs. Lu Lablache and Mr. Bassett Roe. The piece is a little wordy here and there, but has elements of popularity.

Not at all too soon, judges and juries are hardening their hearts against journalistic traders in defamatory gossip. Every case of the sort that comes into court affords fresh proof of this wholesome reaction against the terrorism of that loathsome execration, "society journalism." It is a horrible thing that any man who objects to his himself or his family or his business held up to public odium should be liable to have even a trifling cadillaco of his past life raked up against him, with whatever embellishments forensic genius can invent. There are few so perfect liars that at one time or another they have done this which they bitterly regret, and it is on this feeling that the journalistic libeller trades.

Owing to Christmas Day falling on a weekday this year, it will scarcely be possible for most people to get away for a long holiday. When it falls on a Thursday or Friday this coming year, it will be a relief, for the day will be managed in many cases, while when it comes on Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday the matter is even less easy. But Wednesday is too far from Christmas Day for a half-holiday and the Sunday whole day to admit of a day's rest from business. The whole being Boxing Day, will, of course, be thrown on Friday, in most instances work will have to be carried on Friday. This necessity is to be regretted, but needs must when some drive.

The French Government will not much regret the appointment of Prince Louis Bonaparte to the commission in the Russian Army. They will perceive in it an indication that the Czar believes the possibility of a Napoleonic restoration in France, and thinks it is well, therefore, to behave kindly to a family which may yet rule at Paris. Russia is always hospitable to pretenders who likely to be of use to her in the time to come. She shows on her person and a few others of her kind who have been expelled from Afghanistan and India, whom she keeps in reserve rods in pickle for England's back the first time any dispute arises between London and St. Petersburg.

There is a dry humour in 'busmen which distinguishes them from almost every other class of community. It is purely spontaneous, too, burning forth on the spur of the moment. The other night I travelled home in company with an exuberant gentleman who kept on telling the conductor to put him down at the White Swan. Now, it happened that there was no hotel at that particular road, as the conductor explained. At last, however, the jolly old boy got down—without great difficulty—and proclaimed that White Swan of his affections was close "Gläd to hear it," said the conductor. "But you'll take my advice you'll not drop into more Swans, black or white, to-night, or you're wanting a different sort of conveyance to take you home." "Whatah short?" inquired the toper, swaying to and fro. "A full-sized hearse on patent springs, and a chap to beat off snakes," was the rejoinder as we dashed a mile into the darkness.

MR. WHEELER.

Our guide, philosopher, and friend, the "Political Cyclist," rails at me for advising wheelmen to put by their machines during winter. As I am waiting for three weeks, he at last got a fine excuse for a ride, and he considers that a sufficient reason for keeping his safety ready for the road. "We should not be so easily satisfied. The exhilarating feeling of being on one," which he states "always engendered by cycling on a sunny, frost-glorious winter day," may be an exquisite sensation for all I know. But here in London a winter day is too much like angels' visits to earth, and the trouble of keeping a machine in good order. That toil is, of course, all in the

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For some time past a gang of men have been attempting, under conditions of much peril, to repair one of the big Birmingham corporation gasholders. The work had to be attacked from within the holder, and in order to make it possible for men to descend, the gas was exhausted, and the holder filled with air. But the water which the tank contained proved to be in a very foul condition

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A BABOON HUNT IN LAMBETH.
An exciting scene has been witnessed in
neighbourhood of Westminster Bridge-road.

neighbourhood of Westminster bridge, and
 between one and two o'clock a large baboon made its
 escape from Sanger's Amphitheatre, and ran along the
 Laubach Palace-road, biting and snapping at
 everyone he met. Considerable alarm was
 caused, but eventually the animal was recaptured
 and taken back to his cage. Three children were
 treated at the St. Thomas's Hospital, two of
 them having been bitten and one knocked down
 by the brute.

In a Rugby match at Eccles on Saturday one of
 the visiting team got his nose smashed in a fall,
 and was removed in an insensible condition. The
 ground was hard and covered with snow.

The Duc and Duchesse de Mouchy (and Colonel
 Massing, military attaché of the French Em-
 bassy, left Windsor Castle on Saturday, on the
 conclusion of their visit to her Majesty.

POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.	CURES
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.	A
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.	COUGH.
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POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.	ASTHMA,
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.	BRONCHITIS
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.	INFLUENZA.
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.	CATARH.
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.	NIGHT COUGH
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.	AND
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.	ALL
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.	PULMONARY

POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED, 25 CENTS.
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED, 25 CENTS.
One dose immediately relieves, and one bottle seldom fails to cure a cough.
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED, 25 CENTS.
No family should be without it in the Winter.
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED, 25 CENTS.
Loosens the Phlegm immediately.
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED, 25 CENTS.
Night Cough quickly relieved.
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED, 25 CENTS.
It is pleasant to take and most comforting.
POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED, 25 CENTS.
Its large sale throughout the civilized world proclaims its great worth.
Those who have not given it a trial should do so at once. In Palace and Cottage alike, Powell's Balsam of Aniseed is the most useful and successful remedy.
This old and invaluable medicine possesses the extraordinary property of immediately relieving Coughs, Colds, Hoarseness, Difficulty of Breathing, and Raskiness in the Throat, and by dissolving the condensed mucus from the lungs, free expectoration.
The unpleasant sensation of tickling in the throat, which deprives so many of rest during the night by the incessant coughing it causes, is quickly removed by a dose of Powell's Balsam of Aniseed.
Well-known Lights of the CHURCH, the BAR, and the STAGE have spoken of its especial excellence.
"WORTH A JEW'S EYE" FOR A COUGH.
Ask for **POWELL'S BALSAM OF ANISEED.**
Sold by Chemists everywhere. Established 1824.
Prepared by **THOMAS POWELL, Blackfriars-road, London.**
Price is 1/6d, 2s, 3s, per bottle. Family bottles can be had.
See Trade Mark, "Lion, Net, and Mouse," on each wrapper.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
SMALL SIZE, SMALL DOSE, SMALL PRICE.
CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
For Torrid Liver and Headache.
CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
Regulate Liver and Bowels.
CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.

Promote Digestion.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 Allopathic in Action.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 Purely Vegetable.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 Sugar Coated.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 You Can't Help Liking Them.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 They are so Very Small.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 And their Action so Perfect.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 On After Eating.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 Relieves Dyspepsia.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 Give Tone and Vigour to the system.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 Make Life Feel Worth Living.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 Everybody Likes Them.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 No Trouble to Swallow.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.
 The Standard Pill of the Canadian Dominion and United States. Established 1846.
 SUGAR COATED.

HOMOEOPATHIC IN SIZE.
 ALLOPATHIC IN ACTION.

SMALL SIZE, SMALL DOSE, SMALL PRICE.
 Purely Vegetable, and do not gripe or purge, but by their gentle action please all who use them.

Sold by ALL CHEMISTS, &c.

WHAT

SCOTT'S EMULSION

CURES.

CONSUMPTION SCROFULA BRONCHITIS

COUGHS, COLDS, WASTING DISEASES.

—

WONDERFUL FLESH PRODUCER.

USE IT, AND TRY YOUR WEIGHT.

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SCOTT'S EMULSION is not a secret remedy. It contains the stimulating properties of the Hypophosphites and of the Norwegian Cod Liver Oil, the potency of both being largely increased. It is used by Physicians all over the world.

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RAILWAY ARRANGEMENTS--(CONTINUED).

[illegible][illegible]

DECEMBER 24th. ADDITIONAL TRAINS will be run to the requirements of traffic. The 5.6 p.m., 6.39 p.m., and 10.40 Expresses from King's Cross will be run to York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, and Glasgow as advertised in the number time tables, and a Special Express will leave London (King's Cross) at 11.45 MIDNIGHT for Wexley, Havering, Northfleet, Thurrock, Grays, and Tilbury, and also for Harlow, Spalding, Boston, Grimsby, Grantham, Lincoln, Loughborough, Newark, Bedford, Doncaster, Wakefield, Leeds, and Bradford. The 1.15 p.m. Express from London (King's Cross) to York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, London, &c.

CHRISTMAS DAY the trains will run as on Sundays, except that the 5.15 a.m. Express from King's Cross will be run to Peterborough, Easington, Stamford, Bourn, Grantham, Northampton, and Luton, and the 1.15 p.m. Express from London, Leeds, Bradford, and Halifax, stopping at the intermediate stations at which it ordinarily calls, and will be run to York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, London, &c.

HENRY OAKLEY, General Manager.
King's Cross, December, 1898.

GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY.—CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

[illegible]

Lowestoft, Yarmouth, &c.
 11.15 a.m. to BRIMBORNE, St. Margaret, Ware,
 and all Stations to which the above line runs.
 6.53 a.m. TRAIN TO CAMBRIDGE, &c., will be in con-
 junction with Trains to Danmow, Braintree, Hadfield, Walsden,
 Berrill, Long Melford, Sudbury, Newmarket, Bury, St.
 Peterborough, Wisbech, Wicken, Mildenhall, Lynn, Hunstanton,
 &c., Bradford, Dereham, Thetford, Norwich, &c., calling at
 intermediate Stations.
 For further particulars see Programme issued by the Com-
 pany.
WILLIAM BIRT, General Manager.
 London, December, 1929.

LONDON, CHATHAM, AND DOVER RAILWAY.
NEW EXPRESS THIRD-CLASS SERVICE TO PARIS.
VIA CHATHAM AND DOVER.
1. VICTORIA EXPRESS. Leaving at 7.15 (Sundays, 6.45).
2. LONDON AND ST. LOUIS. 7.45 morning, arriving
 at Paris at 7.45 next morning. Returning from Paris at 6.15
 p.m., arriving in London at 5.45 a.m.
 Return Fare (available fourteen days), 3s. 9d.

DOCK'S

GOLD MEDAL, PARIS, 1889.

Tested in a Physiological Laboratory as a Germ Destroyer, and found to be more efficient than any other.

Recommended by
**THE HIGHEST MEDICAL
AUTHORITIES FOR
ECZEMA, RINGWORM,
and all
SKIN DISORDERS.**

"Lancet," May 17th, 1889, says—
"The importance of such a dose in
Medical and Sanitary Science is very
obvious."

SOLD BY ALL CHEMISTS

Manufacturers—
EDWARD COOK & CO.
Household and Toilet Soap Makers,
London, E.

(Johnson's Patent.)

IBBIS COMPANY'S EXTRACT OF BEEF.
Improved and Economic Cookery

IBBIS COMPANY'S EXTRACT OF BEEF.
As Stock for Beef Tea, Soups, Made Dishes.

IBBIS COMPANY'S EXTRACT OF BEEF.
As Stock for sauces (Game, Fish, &c.) Apple, or
Meat Jelly.

IBBIS COMPANY'S EXTRACT OF BEEF.
Keeps for any length of time.

IBBIS COMPANY'S EXTRACT OF BEEF.
Is cheaper and of finer Savour than any other
Stock.

IBBIS COMPANY'S EXTRACT OF BEEF.
Forty Pounds of prime lean beef are used to make
Quintals of Extract of Beef.

COOKERY BOOKS (INDISPENSABLE FOR LADIES),
sent free on application to

IBBIS'S EXTRACT OF MEAT COMPANY (Limited),

5, FENCHURCH AVENUE, E.C.

**MRS. WINSLOW'S
OOTHING SYRUP
FOR CHILDREN TEETHING.**

It easily facilitates the process of Teething; reduces inflammation, allays all pain, and is

SURE TO REGULATE THE BOWELS.

And upon it, Mothers, it will give rest to yourselves, and

RELIEF AND HEALTH TO YOUR INFANTS.

One Half Chemist's, 1s. 15d. per bottle.

**THE MEXICAN
HAIR REGENER**

Prevents the Hair from falling off.
Restores Grey or White Hair to its ORIGINAL
COLOUR.

Being delicately perfumed, it leaves no unpleasant odour.
IS NOT a dye, and therefore does not stain the skin,
or even white linen.

Should be in every home where a **HAIR RENEVER** is needed.
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aken to the Children's Caroline Hospital.

A telegram from Sydney states that Peter Kemp has stated in an interview that he is prepared to maintain the scouling championship against all comers.

The strike of nailmakers in Staffordshire and Worcestershire terminated on Thursday, the masters conceding the 10 per cent. advance asked for.

In consequence of the continuance of the strike goods porters on the Great Southern and Western Railways at London, no goods trains have arrived from the South during the past two days, and cases of urgency the goods are sent by road.

At the annual rent audit of the Earl of Warwick remission of 15 per cent. was allowed on the rents of the agricultural tenants. This is in addition to several previous reductions during the past few years.

The funeral of Mr. Jefferson Davis in New Orleans, evoked general manifestations of sorrow, business being suspended, and the remains being escorted to the cemetery by a procession of the public bodies and other organisations.

A telegram has been sent by the Arts and Letters Club to Mr. Stanley, at Zambar, congratulating him on his brilliant success, and safe return to civilization, and inviting him to a banquet in his honor. Mr. Stanley has replied, accepting the invitation, in cordial terms.

Mr. Stanhope presented the price on Wednesday night which had been offered by the Bloombury Ladies. His speech he detailed the steps taken by the Government to weld the Volunteer Organisation into its place in the arrangements for the defence of the country.

At a convention held in Dublin to establish a "Parachute of the Tenants' Defence Association," Archbishop Walsh expressed misgiving as to any development of Lord Ashbourne's Purchase Act, and advised tenants to act upon the advice of their leaders.

At a largely attended meeting, held at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, under the presidency of Mr. E. Noel, a Liberal Unionist Association for the County of Sussex was formed. The Marquis of Hartington and the Governor, having consented to become President and vice-president respectively, were elected to those positions.

Arrangements have been completed by which the extensive collieries and iron furnaces belonging to Earl Granville, situated at Hanley, Shelton, and Ettricia, have been amalgamated with the Shelton Iron and Steel Company, of which his lordship is already one of the principal partners, into one large limited concern.

Jones, the popular huntsman of the North Cheshire Foxhounds, has met with a severe accident in the hunting field. He was riding hard near Kelsall, in pursuit of a fox, when his horse's leg struck in some boggy ground. The animal fell, throwing Jones heavily, and then, in endeavour to regain his feet, it rolled completely over the prostrate huntsman, crushing him in a dreadful manner.

Mr. Augustus Harris, represented by his solicitors, Messrs. Gadsden and Treherne, made an application to Mr. Vaughan, at Bow-street on Wednesday, for licenses to permit a number of children to appear in the forthcoming pantomime at Drury Lane. Fifteen children were present in court, and Mr. Vaughan granted the necessary licenses. The juvenile performers were all over 8 years of age and under 10.

At the annual meeting of the Central Chamber of Agriculture, at the Society of Arts, resolutions were passed in favour of the corn returns being established in future through the Ministry of Agriculture, and in favour of mushrooms being given the same protection as is afforded to other agricultural produce. The chamber also decided that recent legislation had been prejudicial to the hop and barley growing industries.

The tenth annual exhibition of home-made and other toys for distribution amongst the children in the various London hospitals, workhouses, workhouse schools, and infirmaries will be held in the Grosvenor Gallery, Bond-street, on Monday and Tuesday. From 100 returns which have come in up to and including that date more than 22,000 children in these various institutions, and it is intended to give each of them a separate toy for his or her own use besides the large and more expensive toys which are presented to the various hospitals and workhouses for the general use of the inmates.

Poker has received a terrible blow in Missouri. Colonel Bickey, Colonel Prather, and Colonel Elliott sat down to a game at the Planter House. Luck was against Colonel Elliott, who lost all his cash on hand and £250 lent him by Colonel Prather. Thus far so good; but the contest terminated at all freedom. Colonel Elliott, who is a bank president, has repudiated the obligation and pleads the Gambling Act, and Colonel Bickey, to whom the debt has been assigned, has carried the transaction into court. If there is to be no honour amongst poker players, the game is dead.

Sir Albert Rollit, M.P., addressing a meeting of the London Watch Trade Association at the Maryates Memorial Schools, Clerkenwell, said he was sorry to see such warfare between employers and employed, and also to see such announcement of a strike of the great of the watch industry. He said he did not question the right to combine or strike; and there was only one thing to justify a strike—viz., the success that ultimately attended it. But if the success put one party in the right and another in the wrong, there was still the waste. He wished the people would listen to the advice: "Strike, but listen to reason in time."

An extraordinary scene has taken place before Mr. Justice Murphy and the jurors at Munster Winter Assizes. A farmer named Andrew Bean was indicted for fracturing the arm of a labourer named Ratty of the grand jury, with which he had entered the arm of Ratty's brother, in resisting Ratty's claim to a right of way through his cottage. The jury said they could not agree. The judge told them they were disregarding their oaths, and must find a verdict. They were sent back, but could not agree. The judge said such conduct was outrageous, and he would send the case of this poor labourer so murderously assaulted for trial by a special jury at the next assizes.

**GIVEN GRATIS.
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GIVEN GRATIS.**

GIVEN GRATIS TO ALL.—The following important fact may be too frequently unnoticed upon the minds of suffering humanity, that Mr. HOUN, E.B.F., of Bradford, has, for some time past, and is now giving the Hop Prescription, free of charge, to all applicants for relief. A gentleman has done himself one in possession of this valuable prescription can get 10d. make a quart of this Marvelous Medicine, and for 1s. 6d. can cure himself of Rheumatism, Gout, Gravel, &c. It is very interesting to learn that with this prescription all kinds of hopeless cases have been treated with success when all other means failed. People whose limbs were almost entirely paralyzed have been relieved or cured with this prescription; others have had their reason restored, others their sight; people who could not sleep have had their sleep restored, old people who had never been able to walk again have had their legs restored; people who had suffered years with indigestion and its consequences have had their digestive powers restored; people who had been afflicted with nervous debility, &c., have been cured; people subject to an accumulation of wind and water have been cured; people who had been afflicted with a venereal disease have been cured; people subject to this fortnightly, has not had a bit from the first moment he began taking it. People troubled for years with constipation have had their bowels become regular under its influence. It is a choice, rare, remarkable remedy. The prescription is simple, it is cheap, it is good. Those who have not sent for it should do so, and will be forever indebted to the author. It has done far more than is here claimed for it, proof of which is sent with each Prescription. Thousands are blessing the day the Hop Prescription was discovered. Long-continued use has done for absolutely free of charge to all applicants, rich or poor, who send a stamp for the postage of the same. A word of advice to all who are long-suffering, and who are weary of their regulated minds, and will be found exceedingly advantageous to sensible persons who desire to know what they are availing themselves of. MR. HOUN, E.B.F., 79, THE LANCET OFFICE, GREAT BRIDGE STREET, LONDON, W.C.

APOSTROPHISING PRINCE ALBERT

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